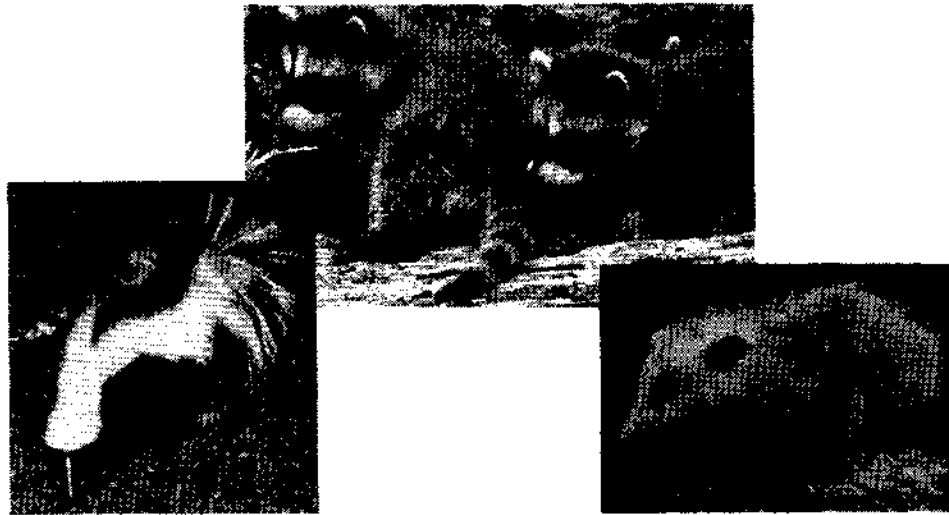


****ATTENTION****

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CONTROLLING NUISANCE SKUNKS, RACCOONS AND OPPOSUMS

Most wildlife species are interesting and enjoyable to have around. Occasionally, however, animals wear out their welcome and become nuisances. Wild animals can become pests by damaging or eating something valuable to us, by getting in or under buildings, or as is the case with skunks, by being too close for comfort.

This publication is a general guide for assisting you when wild animals become pests. The methods of control given may not always work because every situation is unique, and animal behavior is not always predictable. However, these control methods have worked in the past and are among the best available.

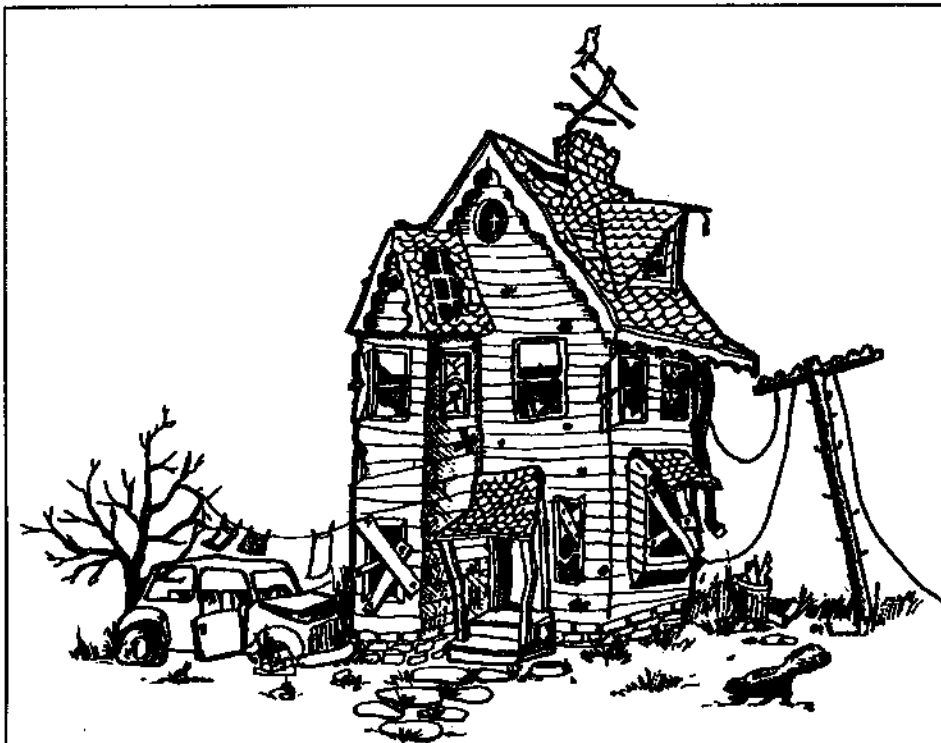
WHAT FIRST?

Ask yourself, why do I have a wildlife problem? Does some situation exist that is encouraging animals to frequent this area? What is it? How can it be changed?

In most cases animals become a nuisance to us by some situation we have created, and most problems are associated with these situations.

WHAT ATTRACTS ANIMALS?

- 1) Animals consider a "hole" a natural home. This may be an open vent under a house allowing access to crawl space or holes under eaves allowing access to the attic or walls. Additionally, old buildings, woodpiles, brush piles and junk piles are all invitations to certain animals saying "move in."
- 2) Food! Over half of all problems with wildlife are food related. Leaving pet food outside within reach of wildlife, leaving garbage available, or raising gardens, chickens, ducks and fish without any protective barriers are common situations which we create that invite problems. Grubs and other



Old buildings and junk piles invite certain animals to "move in."



CONTROLLING NUISANCE SKUNKS, RACCOONS AND OPOSSUMS

(What attracts animals cont.)

insects in your lawn are good food for animals. Fallen fruit is especially attractive to opossums and raccoons. To reduce damage to lawns and golf courses, keep organic materials picked up and use soil insecticides to eliminate the food source that the animals dig for. Animals generally will not dig holes in a sod that is free from insects.

WHAT ARE THE ANSWERS?

If you are providing a home, the answer is the same as you would use with any unwelcome guest: keep "the door" shut. If you are providing food, dry up the food supply.

If an animal is within a building, close up all openings except one. Then sprinkle a patch of flour or talcum powder around the opening and check for tracks after dark to see when the animal leaves. When the animal has left, check for and remove any young, then screen or in some manner seal the opening to prevent its return.

Putting a light in an area bothered by nuisance animals often has a repelling effect, especially on skunks, and may cause them to seek shelter elsewhere. Ordinary fencing will not keep raccoons, opossums and skunks out of gardens or poultry lots. These animals, however, can be repelled by adding a single electrified fence unit. Place the wire about eight inches above ground on short stakes with insulators, or add a four-to-six inch outrider arm to existing posts three feet above the ground, then attach insulators and wire.

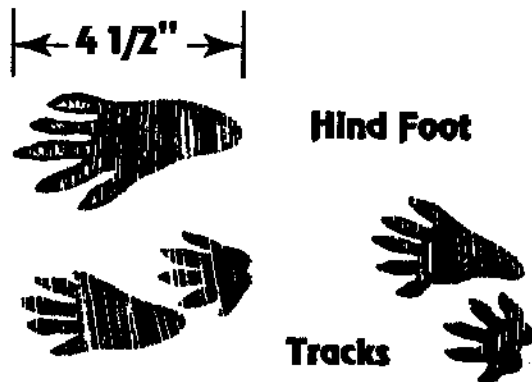
A wire mesh fence six feet high with six inches buried in the ground will prevent entry. Steel posts are best for this type of fence as raccoon and opossums will often climb wooden posts.



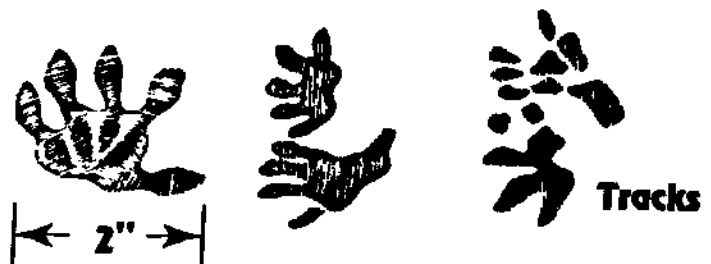
SKUNK TRACKS



RACCOON TRACKS



OPOSSUM TRACKS



CONTROLLING NUISANCE SKUNKS, RACCOONS AND OPOSSUMS

BENEFITS

Before attempting to remove an animal that is mostly a nuisance, you should consider ecological and economic benefits it can provide.

Skunks are beneficial because they feed on large numbers of agricultural and garden pests. Raccoons also feed on insects and, like skunks, they prey on mice and rats.

Opossums, raccoons, and skunks provide recreational opportunities for people who enjoy watching them or those who may hunt or trap.

REPELLENTS

Repellents for keeping these animals out of gardens are used with varied success. What works for one person may not work for another.

The following are home remedies that have been tried with some success: lighting the area with several blinking low wattage bulbs, creating noise with rattling pie pans or a transistor radio, tying the family dog in or close to the garden, and spreading crystals or naphthalene (moth flakes) in small gardens or enclosed areas, such as attics or under buildings. Hanging

bars (or cut up bars hung in cheese-cloth) of deodorant soap in or around the problem areas has often been very effective. Cayenne pepper can be sprinkled on corn silk to repel problem animals.

If the problem still exists, then:

The next step is to identify the animal. Most animals leave one or more calling cards such as tracks, tooth marks, droppings or smell. Often you can see or hear the animal. If you have trouble finding tracks, sprinkle flour or talcum powder on a smooth area near the problem site.

The tracks shown on the opposite page may tell you what action you want to take next.

TRAPPING

Most common pests are easy to live trap. The live trap should be a minimum of 10" x 10" x 24" for skunks and opossums. These are the only type of traps that should be used around a house to prevent the taking of pets. When setting a live trap, be sure it is on level ground, so it is not wobbly when the animal enters. To reduce the possibility of the skunk releasing his spray, use a wooden box trap or a wire-cage style trap covered with burlap or black plastic. Live traps can be purchased at farm or hardware stores or built in a home shop.

BAITS

When baiting in a live trap, place it behind or attach it to the trigger mechanism depending on how the trap door is activated. These animals are all attracted to fish, shellfish, fish-flavored cat food, chicken parts or bacon. In cases where pets are present, use either peanut butter or whole white eggs in the shell as bait. This generally eliminates the problem of pets being attracted to the bait.

DISPOSITION

After the problem animal is captured, it can be relocated in a remote area (see any special instructions). Skunks and opossums are not classified as game animals and may be destroyed. One method of disposal is to gently submerge the trap in water for 10 minutes. Raccoons are classified as game animals and therefore must be relocated as per attached instructions.

It should be noted that Washington law prohibits taking from the wild and holding in captivity any Washington wildlife, therefore these animals cannot be kept as pets.

Special Instructions
